

# 172nd Avenue NE Corridor Study

## **Draft Report | Public Open House #1**

Thursday April 27, 2006

### **Introduction**

In March the City of Redmond began work on the 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE Corridor study, which will look at potential improvements to 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE from NE 111<sup>th</sup> to NE 124<sup>th</sup> Street (and in King County from NE 124<sup>th</sup> to NE 128<sup>th</sup> Street). This study will evaluate the following:

- Extending 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE between NE 122<sup>nd</sup> and NE 124<sup>th</sup> Street and adding traffic calming devices ( Segment C on the map) or, as an alternative, improving NE 122 Street/162<sup>nd</sup> Place NE from 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE to NE 124<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Adding traffic calming devices between NE 111<sup>th</sup> and NE 122<sup>nd</sup> Street (Segments A and B on the map).
- Adding traffic calming devices between NE 124<sup>th</sup> and NE 128<sup>th</sup> Street (King County) (Segment D on the map)—dependent on the ultimate decision on the roadway extension.

The roadway extension is identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Transportation Master Plan, as an important connection in the North Redmond area. Currently, traffic speeds along 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue are close to 10 MPH or more over the posted speed limit, which meets City criteria for implementing traffic calming measures. In addition, with several development applications along NE 122<sup>nd</sup> Street and 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE, it is important that future developments are conditioned effectively. The City Council has requested a study of the area to evaluate the impacts of extending 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE, explore ways to slow down traffic on the corridor, and identify preferred improvements.

As part of the study, the City is implementing a public process to provide information and to get input on the proposed extension and the traffic calming measures. The public process includes stakeholder interviews, two newsletters and two open houses. This document reports the results of the first open house. The purpose of the first open house was to introduce the 172nd corridor study to area residents and gather input on the proposed roadway extension and traffic calming improvements. The second open house will focus on receiving input on a refined set of alternatives.

## **Meeting Format**

On Thursday April 27, 2006 twenty-six people signed into the 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE Corridor Study Public Open House. The meeting was held from 5:00 – 7:30 at the Horace Mann Elementary School. A newsletter announcing the project and open house was distributed to more than 400 residents living in the project vicinity.

Attendees were greeted by project staff and were given a comment form and information on the project. They were asked to identify their home with a push pin on a map of the region. A 45 minute presentation was given at 5:45 and attendees were given an opportunity to ask questions between the project overview/extension and the traffic calming presentations. Chris Hoffman from Norton-Arnold & Company welcomed residents and introduced the Rosemarie Ives, the Mayor of Redmond. Mayor Ives discussed the importance of the project and the value of public input. City of Redmond Project Engineer, Jeanne Justice, then presented an overview of the project. Following Jeanne's presentation attendees had an opportunity to ask questions about the project. To view these questions please see Attachment A. Following the first Question & Answer period, Jeff palmer, the City's Neighborhood Traffic Calming Coordinator, presented information about traffic calming between NE 111<sup>th</sup> and NE 122<sup>nd</sup> Street and NE 124<sup>th</sup> and NE 128<sup>th</sup> Street. A Question & Answer period followed Jeff's presentation. These questions can also be located in Attachment A.

## **Comment Highlights**

Three attendees completed forms at the open house and more than five residents emailed comments to project staff. There were a range of comments about the project, which addressed issues from traffic calming and the extension of 172nd Avenue NE to the public open house and utilities along the roadway. The majority of the residents felt that traffic calming devices will create a safer environment and will help control speed along the corridor and streets connecting to the corridor. Many citizens liked the idea of roundabouts and a multi-modal corridor.

In addition to traffic calming, residents addressed the 172nd Avenue NE extension. While some residents felt that extending 172nd Avenue NE would reduce the traffic burden on other arterials and that many local residents would use this connection, others did not like the idea of extending the corridor. These residents felt that traffic would increase along 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE and that drivers would speed on the corridor. Additionally, several residents felt that the negative impacts on the neighborhood would outweigh the benefits of the extension.

### Project Overview/Extension

- Q: What level of detail is available regarding plans for the roadway? For example, is there information on speed limits and whether there are plans for a multi-modal road?**
- Q: Os the speed limit on 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE 25 mph?**
- Q: Is there a plan to reduce the speed limit on 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE?**
- Q: If the budget is large enough to make 116<sup>th</sup> multi-modal, will the speed limit be different?**
- Q: What will keep 172<sup>nd</sup> from becoming an arterial? Will traffic be funneled?**

### Traffic Calming

- Q: What is a 22 foot traffic table?**
- Q: How do pedestrians use a round-about?**
- Q: What is the speed around a round-about? What are the right-of-way rules?**
- Q: What is the height/size of the speed bumps on 111<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE?**
- Q: Will the section on 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE (between 111<sup>th</sup> and 116<sup>th</sup>) be treated the same with regards to traffic calming?**
- Q: When the project is finished, is there assurance that traffic calming devices will be built on the segment through 124<sup>th</sup>(Outside City limits)?**
- Q: What are the city limits?**

## Attachment B

### Written Comments – comment form and email

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#### Traffic Calming

- I think that cutting 172<sup>nd</sup> through to 124<sup>th</sup> will create a **huge** increase in speeding traffic. The best traffic calming device you have is the break in 172<sup>nd</sup>.
- Appreciate staff efforts.
- Yes! Make it functional and attractive. The ratio of cement/planting mix/plants in the new traffic calming done along 111<sup>th</sup> is too unbalanced. The planting area needs to be bigger if the plants are to grow. The signs and all of the “turtle bumps” look like overkill.
- Speed controls along 111<sup>th</sup> were important. I would like to see something similar done along 172<sup>nd</sup>, but “meatier” in some way. The planters are rather small and not able to hold any plants of substantial size. Then, the “island signs” take away from the garden look of the island, and make it look like a sign in a parking lot. I like the speed bumps!
- Intersection of 116<sup>th</sup> and 172<sup>nd</sup>: I’m now very much in favor of the roundabout (previously I was a bit against it). There are a couple of reasons I changed my mind:
  - I think a large roundabout at that intersection would do a better job slowing traffic through the intersection. A couple of nights ago I was standing on my back porch and I saw a car fly through the intersection way above the speed limit on 116<sup>th</sup>. It occurred to me that a traffic light won’t do anything to solve that problem, and might even aggravate it (people accelerating to “make” the green light).
  - Visually, if we want that intersection to be a gateway/center of the neighborhood, I think there are some opportunities that the roundabout presents that are more attractive than an intersection. I’m not sure what the options for the central area are—I assume any landscaping needs to be low to allow sight-paths through the roundabout—but I think something nice could be done within those constraints.
  - Setting the crosswalks back from the roundabout and providing a center island gives me more confidence that pedestrians can cross safely. I’m still a little worried, but I think it’s still a better solution than the signaled intersection (where I would be most concerned about people making quick turns from 116<sup>th</sup> onto 172<sup>nd</sup> and hitting pedestrians in the crosswalk).
  - The existing sight distances at the intersection (especially at the Northwest corner) are dangerous. A roundabout would open up the intersection and alleviate that problem (at the expense of acquiring the land along the corner).

### **Traffic calming on 172<sup>nd</sup> between 111<sup>th</sup> and 116<sup>th</sup>**

- I **really** like the incorporation of a traffic circle at the entrances to Grayson (at NE 115<sup>th</sup> Way and potentially at NE 112<sup>th</sup> Way). I think those two additions greatly improve the local-road feel. A nice side effect may be to reduce speeding into/out of the entrances to Grayson (the owners of the house that sits at the Northeast corner of Grayson (wedged between 116<sup>th</sup>, 172<sup>nd</sup>, and 115<sup>th</sup>) have small children and have complained that people in our neighborhood turn into 115<sup>th</sup> way too fast before slowing down.
- I slightly prefer alternative 1 for Segment A. I think that a speed hump in the center of 172<sup>nd</sup> may have a greater impact on traffic speeds than the center median would, and I like the fact that this option includes a traffic circle at the NE 112<sup>th</sup> way (southern) entrance to Grayson. The other concern I have about the median is that most of the Eastern side of the street is undeveloped and there are some driveways that lead directly onto 172<sup>nd</sup>, so you need to design the median to allow entrance/egress to a changing situation. On the other hand, I think the continuous median may be a more attractive solution (depending on how it's planted and how wide it is- what could you plant in the median- could small trees be allowed, or is it just low scrub?). I also really hate the idea of a fixed radar site (our houses are elevated such that the radar sign is going to be visible from people's back porches).
- Be sure to leave room for bicycle lanes on each side of the road. That's why I'm not a fan of bump-outs at the curbs.
- The Southernmost crosswalk connects the Puget Power trail across 172<sup>nd</sup>. Would this be raised? Note that the school bus currently picks up/drops off kids just north of 112<sup>th</sup>, so kids will be crossing there and not along the power trail. On the other hand, we would prefer if the bus would pickup/dropoff further north (closer to 115<sup>th</sup> Way), which they won't do currently since there's no sidewalk and the school transportation dept. deemed the intersection at 116<sup>th</sup> too close and worried about accidents; maybe the improvements to the intersection will change their mind. On the third hand, we've been notified that once sidewalks are completed from 172<sup>nd</sup> down to Einstein, they'll cut off elementary school bus service, so we'll only need to worry about high school service.

### **Traffic calming on 172<sup>nd</sup> North of 116<sup>th</sup>**

- Not too much opinion here, since I imagine you have lots of feedback from other people in this neighborhood. Again, I like the incorporation of traffic circles (e.g. at the intersection of 116<sup>th</sup> & 122<sup>nd</sup>) and I think this would help discourage cut through traffic if used with other traffic calming mechanisms. I still worry about cut through if 172<sup>nd</sup> is extended to the north.

## Extension of 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE

- Don't do it! All of north English Hill will come flying through. There is very little benefit for North Redmond neighbors.
- Don't do it. Homes already there were not built to take this traffic—a new “Avondale Speedway” is not needed along 172<sup>nd</sup>. It will ruin that whole corridor, traffic calming or not. Use roads already in place. King County does not have the money to develop.
- We DO NOT support Extending 172<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE between NE 122<sup>nd</sup> and NE 124<sup>th</sup> St. This major extension will turn this neighborhood into another traffic congestion area and further deteriorate peacefulness of the area. Other improvements listed there on Segment A, B & D are fine.
- I would like to express my opposition to the proposal to open 172<sup>nd</sup> from 122<sup>nd</sup> to 124<sup>th</sup>. To be honest with you I would probably benefit from having 172<sup>nd</sup> open directly into Redmond. I would have more driving options and on some days shorter commutes. However I believe the negative impact to the surrounding neighborhoods is going too far out weigh any personal benefit. In addition, I believe that there is a high likelihood that if 172<sup>nd</sup> is opened up south of 128<sup>th</sup> more traffic is going to flow north of 128<sup>th</sup> into the English Hill neighborhood. People are going to be looking for a way through to Woodinville. The effect will be that we get more traffic traveling faster into our neighborhood which is obviously a negative for our neighborhood. As I am sure you are aware 172<sup>nd</sup> is heavily used by the people of neighborhood for walking, running and bicycle riding. It is also heavily traveled by our kids on their way to and from Sunrise Elementary which is located on 172<sup>nd</sup>. Also I am sure you are aware we are already struggling with traffic issues through our neighborhood and as you can imagine the change that Redmond is proposing will only amplify those problems. In closing, I truly believe opening 172<sup>nd</sup> is the wrong thing to do for English Hill and our sister neighborhoods and has the potential to fundamentally change the character of our neighborhoods. There are alternatives to opening 172<sup>nd</sup> that would affect far fewer people. Redmond should be pursuing other less disruptive alternatives.
- Definitely think it is needed.
- Extension is a good idea. We are all aware of the heavy traffic load on 124<sup>th</sup> and this will continue to grow. If the city had redesigned the intersection of 124<sup>th</sup> and Redmond-Woodinville highway properly maybe this would not have to be. This intersection does not flow; it was failing before redesign and continues to fail. What a waste of money and resources. I won't get into this, what was done is done. I work in civil engineering and the redesign of that intersection was poorly thought out and does not take in future growth. So, that said, I see no reasonable alternatives to improve traffic flows on 124<sup>th</sup>. Many on this hill say the problem will be traffic coming from 122<sup>nd</sup>. This is wrong; the traffic problems are not coming from in town growth as much as from the outlying areas and this growth will continue. Yes, the infill of houses puts a burden on our roads but most of this is

coming from areas of growth beyond the 122<sup>nd</sup> and 172<sup>nd</sup> neighborhoods. I have three reasons 172<sup>nd</sup> needs to be opened.

- To relieve the traffic burden on 124<sup>th</sup> and Redmond-Woodinville intersection now and in the future. Many of these people are headed to Redmond and the left turn pocket to Redmond is too short not to mention the lack of a turning lane for Woodinville.
  - A safety issue with 164<sup>th</sup> and 122<sup>nd</sup> Street. This intersection is a real hazard to drivers trying to cross 124<sup>th</sup> from 164<sup>th</sup> to 122<sup>nd</sup>; they are putting the lives in danger. This intersection needs a signal before someone gets killed. I have seen people headed for Redmond driving down 124<sup>th</sup> in the oncoming lane to turn left on 122<sup>nd</sup> and near misses with cars coming from 164<sup>th</sup>. This intersection has a water problem. Water is seeping and running across the intersection and becomes very slippery in cold weather this has been an issue for years. The problems are compounded with its location on a hill and curve. By opening up 172<sup>nd</sup> those who make that left onto 122<sup>nd</sup> Street will be making a much safer left turn on a safe control intersection.
  - A cost issue. The barricade at the end of 172<sup>nd</sup> is there for a reason. When the development was first built the intent was for the future extension of this road those who bought houses there bought knowing full well this could come to pass. The cost to the extension of this road far outweighs the cost of redesigning, straightening, regarding, the west part 122<sup>nd</sup>, which had been mentioned, or so I have heard. The intersection of 172<sup>nd</sup> and 124<sup>th</sup> is already established. The visibility and grades are good for this kind of improvement.
- I ask you what are the cons? Yes the folks who live along the south side of 172<sup>nd</sup> are going to be greatly impacted. And yes we might get higher traffic speed on 172<sup>nd</sup>, frankly we have that already. Traffic calming improvements can be added. I see no real reason why this improvement should not be done. I for one would use it and so would the people who live there. Growth is going to happen and continue. We can not stop it we can only try and manage it; this is your job. Even if you choose not to open this street at this time, I believe we will be right back here in the future as the growth continues. I also think it comes down to a safety issue. Something really needs to be done about the 122<sup>nd</sup> and 124<sup>th</sup> intersection, this is not a safe intersection. So I strongly encourage you to think hard and plan ahead and count the cars headed to Redmond. Add in the future growth and then do the math.
- I love the idea of making 172nd Ave NE a multi-use road, and putting a corner commercial area there with a coffee shop and other small businesses, with lower-priced housing and apartments above.

## Other Comments

- So far, I'm totally supportive of all that the City of Redmond and the North Redmond community committees have proposed. I hope there are many others such as myself out there—residents of developments—who feel the same way. I would love to see Redmond develop into a more progressive, unique, and interesting city, and many of the plans for this area seem to be going in that direction.
- There are many others I have also heard who worry that some of these plans, such as the corner commercial area on NE 116th St/172nd Ave NE, will bring down their housing values. I know the entire Grayson development has signed a petition against this proposal. I think this is so small-minded of them and extremely greedy. The home prices in this corridor are already so preposterously expensive, and I highly doubt that a little retail corner across from them would bring down their home values by any significant amount. It would be so great to have a real neighborhood corner that we could all walk to, get a cup of coffee and a paper, drop off some dry cleaning, etc., and have a chance to meet neighbors from all over the corridor who also walked over. The whole idea is to get people out of their cars and their houses and have real face-to-face interactions!
- Is parking going to be allowed along 172<sup>nd</sup> by Cam West/Burnstead development? I hope not. Reduce the speed on 116<sup>th</sup>—people do NOT go 35 mph. Add bike lanes along 172<sup>nd</sup>! Make it **very** pedestrian friendly. How do pedestrians get across a round-about? Make substantial medians with attractive trees.
- I think a light at 162<sup>nd</sup> and 124<sup>th</sup> will be appropriate; with the improvements along with 122<sup>nd</sup>.
- I'd like to see more inter-neighborhood connectivity explicitly planned now, rather than relying on 172<sup>nd</sup> to carry the entire burden. We should have more connections between 116<sup>th</sup> and 122<sup>nd</sup> (e.g. through Northstar), between 128<sup>th</sup> and 116<sup>th</sup> (somewhere between 172<sup>nd</sup> and Avondale), and between 116<sup>th</sup> and 111<sup>th</sup>.
- Anything you guys can do to improve traffic on Avondale to the south and at the intersection of 124<sup>th</sup> and Red-Wood Road will have a major impact on reducing cut through traffic on 172<sup>nd</sup>.
- I also support the addition of a new fire station to our neighborhood. I have heard that the land designated for this (where the moldy old "Coming Soon – Redmond Fire Station" sign now stands) has been there for many years now, and I don't know all the reasons why it has not been built. But I do think a new fire station closer to the North Redmond community is extremely vital and of utmost importance.



- I also support the church on the corner of Red-Wood Road and NE 124th St in developing their land and making it into a major commercial area (as long as Thenos Dairy and Vivian's Pride Ice Cream may remain!).
- There are those who oppose these plans because they want this part of Redmond to stay "rural," which I find to be ridiculous, because Redmond hasn't been truly "rural" in years. The diversity of the Redmond community has given the city a much more cosmopolitan feel, and I support any plans to make Redmond a leader in how its neighborhoods evolve and grow.
- I would also like to add that a neighborhood park on NE 116th Street would be fantastic. The closest city park to us is Meadows Park, which is quite a bit of a walk. With so many new developments on the 116th corridor, it would make sense to have a medium-sized park with a playground for the residents to be able to walk to.

### **Alternatives Preference**

- Alternative 2 for all segments.
- Alternative 1, Segment C: Don't do this segment. Keep it as a pathway/bikeway.
- Alternative 2, Segment C: Please look at the 122<sup>nd</sup>/162<sup>nd</sup> improvements only!
- Alternative 1, Segment D: this is out of character with the neighborhood.

### **Public Open House**

- I was really impressed with the quality and professionalism of the open house yesterday. You guys really did a great job.